



We wish you a Merry Christmas And a Happy New Year too. See you in 2012!

SPOKE

A LEARNING NEWSROOM FOR JOURNALISM STUDENTS



Staff these stockings
These days
will add fun
to an old tradition
Page 10

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2012

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DASHING THROUGH THE SPRINKLING OF SNOW THIS SEASON AT CASTLE HILBRIDE



PHOTO BY STEVE HARRIS

Local residents join to have their pictures taken with reindeer outside Castle Hilbride, a historical site in Baden, on Nov. 26. The castle was built in 1877 by James Livingston and was named after his birthplace, East Hilbride in Scotland. The castle is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m. and Christmas-themed tours will continue until Jan. 6.

Warm a heart with a stuffed stocking

BY SHERRY HENRY

Organizers of the Staff in Stockings campaign hope 1,000 stockings will be donated this year.

The charity hopes the stockings will serve Christmas knappers for local needy children and youth.

Staff in Stockings founder, Carolyn Parks, came up with the idea back in 2010 out of her own love for stockings as a child.

"Stockings were always my favorite part of Christmas," she said.

When she started, Parks, of St. Joseph, first wanted to make a difference and donate some filled stockings. She modeled a few of her friends asking if they were interested in helping out, which they were. By the end of the email, she had about 40 other stockings.

Her husband called the

Watson Region Record and they wrote a story about it after which Quarry Communications got involved, donating 100 filled stockings to the cause.

After about two weeks, Parks had approximately 100 stuffed stockings to donate. It was then she realized this had legs.

In 2012, Parks registered Staff in Stockings as an official charity. Quarry Communications donated again last year along with other companies that had gotten on board such as the St. Joseph Lions Club, Shady Heating, Shady's TV and RV Center Store. Last year, the charity handed out 160 stockings.

This year the charity has even more companies willing to donate and help out with the cause such as Grand River Kettle which is turning a collection day to gather

stocking stuffer items. The Perimeter Institute is also on board this year providing funds. Other companies help out and include All Things Tea, Whiting and Company Baking, The Shop at Watson Town Square and Filament Inc.

"Quarry Communications is still one of our biggest supporters," Parks said. "They're amazing. They asked us for a list of items of where their stockings could go. They also asked about age and gender. When we go to pick up the stockings, they're sitting in the lobby labeled to make our job a little easier when it comes down to handing them."

This year Staff in Stockings is putting a huge focus on stockings for teenagers, age 13 and up. Parks said it is primarily easier to find stocking stuffers for children than for teenagers so their sometimes got overlooked.

Amal Gandy, 15, who started

stocking in 2011, said, "Last year I put together some stockings for the young children. It wasn't too hard to find simple things for them like cards, little books, coloring books and crayons. Teenagers though, some like them would be a lot more of a challenge."

To make filling stockings for teenagers, Parks recommends incentives such as toiletries, toiletries, soap, deodorant, hair accessories and more.

"There are practical and glamorous items. So, because teenagers are people, they'll want to have some fun too. For girls, I'd suggest a journal, your own gift guide. For boys I'd say gift cards, wallets and shavers."

To help prepare the footstuffs, Shady's Play will be held Saturday, Dec. 8 from 1-3 p.m. at Watson Town Square. There will be a stall from Santa, elves, good, bad, mean, and love musical



PHOTO BY SHERRY HENRY

Amal Gandy, 15, drops a filled stocking in the Staff in Stockings campaign collection bin at Watson Town Square. The donated stockings are given to those less fortunate.

entertainment.

For more information about the stockings, visit www.staffinstockings.ca, facebook.com/staffinstockings or email Carolyn at carolyn@staffinstockings.ca.

Now deep thoughts ... with Conestoga College

Random questions answered by random students

If you could take only one thing to a deserted island, what would it be and why?



"I'd bring water because you can't live off salt water."

Marissa Gosselin,
first-year
business administration

"I'd take that laptop because you can't build anything out of it, including a boat and sail back."

Isak Westlund,
second-year
business administration



"I would bring a boat because then I could just go."

Brandon Hardy,
second-year
business administration

"I'd bring my Nintendo Switch. It's my most prized possession and my girlfriend got it for me."

Evan Brown,
second-year
business administration



"I'd bring one friend because even though you don't have anything that one person would keep you sane during the whole thing."

Marissa Gosselin,
first-year
business administration

"I'd take a chocolate bar because I like to keep long and it's fun."

Drew Beckwith,
third-year
business administration



Write Conestoga, you wouldn't be our next respondent!

Big hearts fill hampers

BY KIM MANDUEL

It's the time of year for giving and there are many charities to give to. Through food banks, food donations, food pantries, Ontario has had their hampers changed over the past Christmas season.

However, Conestoga Students Inc. has started a Christmas hamper program in conjunction with their first year to help students at Conestoga College who don't have the money to make a Christmas dinner for their family.

This is the first time the program is being held and as for about 10 families have signed up to receive a hamper filled with all the things. The hamper will only cost \$10. The hamper will be delivered to the students during next week.

Kathleen Moore, a third-year student and volunteer, has been helping to organize the hampers and all of them have donated to purchasing hampers to give to families in need.

Though they only started collecting money on Nov. 11, Moore is confident there will be able to raise enough money for at least two hampers.

"One of the things that the students all said was one of the reasons why they were in college was because it was in the Conestoga community," she said.

Moore also said that when she brought it up to her classes, they were more than happy to jump in board.

After talking out an email to a few other faculty mem-

bers, Kim Brooks responded and in donating two hampers as well. And though Moore said she could easily donate one on her own she thought maybe she could get her students to contribute.

In fact, one of Moore's first-year students in her administration, Kathleen Moore, and her and her boyfriend had already planned to donate money to a charity for Christmas this year. So it was right up her alley.

"I'm actually looking at donating more hampers myself," said Moore.

Another first-year student, Moore's boyfriend, said she had volunteered in the past and enjoyed it. So she was eager to help out as well.

"It takes the stress off these students," said Moore.

Both students agreed that \$10 wasn't a large amount of money and their donations may only have to subsidize a portion of the cost to make a donation.

And everyone knows that it's hard to get through school financially, but a lot of students have the luxury of spending time with family the Christmas. For some, it's not, so many. They're barely making ends meet, they have children and they might not be able to travel to be with their families over the holiday season.

With the help of classes such as Moore's, the students who have signed up to ask the students will be able to at least have a good meal to look forward to.

Moore did comment on the amount of courage it took for these students to ask for help and she hopes that their children may find it means to return to school as a gesture.

This is the first time CSI has attempted this type of fundraising and Moore hopes there will be more hampers to fill and more volunteering in years to come.

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Conestoga still a popular choice

BY STEVE KAMONISAR

Conestoga College remains a popular choice amongst high school seniors in the tri-city, with many saying they will apply to Conestoga because of its reputation.

Both young and old showed up to the Open House May 24 to attend the college's annual fall open house which helps inform potential students looking for a post-secondary education about their options. Programs set up in the recreation centre were staffed by faculty and current students, who outlined what the programs were all about and answered questions.

Hydroville resident Caroline McKay, who was leaving the school with her family, decided to give Conestoga a look after her cousin, who is currently a student at Conestoga, recommended it. Although she is still attending high school she is already focusing on getting accepted to Conestoga for post-secondary.

"I've just heard really good things about the school from other people and from my cousin. I haven't really applied anywhere else yet," she said.

The majority of those touring the school were high school seniors either accompanied by family or friends and all seemed enthusiastic about Conestoga as well as the reputation the school held.

Madison Foltz came to the open house after hearing from friends that the graphic design program was one of the best in the area. She has high hopes of getting into the program but is leaving her options open by applying to other schools as well. Her friend Sarah Debeck came to the open house because she was attracted to the nursing program.

"The nursing program here interests me. I like nursing and I'm looking for hands-on experience," she said.

With approximately 3,000 people attending the open house, Conestoga is guaranteed to get some new faces next year.



PHOTO BY STEVE KAMONISAR

Approximately 3,000 potential students and their parents attended Conestoga's fall open house on May 24 to learn of different and more school programs. Faculty and students have all had their portfolios with on hand to answer questions.



PHOTO BY STEVE KAMONISAR

Conestoga students and faculty staff with laptops connected in coming to the college. Open house attendees also had a chance to take a tour of the school during the event.

spoKe videos

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- Get spoiled! Join us on a fabulous holiday walk through the Chorn area hosted by Deputy paramedical team.
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Conestoga College
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CCL, in cooperation with Legato & Associates is sending out a survey to full-time residents to get your feedback on the recreation facilities and food at Conestoga. We're giving away \$500 in prizes to those who take about a minute to fill it out, so make sure you do! Watch your Conestoga email inbox for your invitation in late September.

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SURVEY

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NOVEMBER 22ND - DECEMBER 7TH

Technology has a cost

BY BYLAN BADGER

Social media and cellphones link more with their own perks and, in fact, they are becoming more intertwined as technology will demand consumers.

But with this comes a hit to the critical quality of the communication itself.

People have become used to the short forms of texting and internet communication, meaning mostly it, as a whole, lacks clarity and depth of conversation.

Social media and cellphones have taught users to be concise, but at the same time they promote a lower quality of communication.

Rather than promoting quality over quantity, these things end up meaning both a low quantity and quality.

Writing contents of short messages filled with core ideas, short forms and poor grammar without actually providing any substance to a message – it's more common to see longer posts than proper punctuation and meaningful comments.

Hours of social media add to this problem. Twitter's 140-character limit per tweet ends up resulting in a number of random thoughts that are usually about trivial happenings on the day of the tweet and have no intellectual value.

Facebook is no better. What started out as a tool to remain connected with distant friends has turned into a shambles of self-interest, personal computer for "likes" rather than nurturing some form of quality communication between the viewer and the poster.

Other facets of social media such as YouTube and Instagram are more serious as they rely almost solely on images and contain very little written thought.

Both social media and devices such as cellphones have also impacted younger generations – they can hardly string a sentence together.

The ease of being mistaken with tools such as spellcheck means that many people are sloppy when writing, not only in texting or social media usage but also in formal written work.

Efficiency has killed quality, as many kids tend to write, not write as much as they are instead of using a larger vocabulary. This is a byproduct of technology, providing an easy exit when it comes to communication.

While we move toward an age that is increasingly dependent on technology, especially social media, we must realize that these things come at a cost. Dependence on them must be carefully looked at, as we are suffering the negative ones.

The writer herein represents the position of the newspaper, not necessarily the author.

Letters are welcome

SPOKE welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be signed and include the name and telephone number of the writer. Writers will be contacted for verification.

Un-solicited letters will be published. Letters should be no longer

than 500 words. Spoke reserves the right to edit any letter for publication. Email letters to: conestoga@conestoga.on.ca with the subject line "Letter to the Editor," including Name or Phone 2020 at the bottom of page.



Doomsayers predict the world will come to an end Dec. 21

The world is ending – or is it? Don't drink the Kool-Aid just yet

Realize your umbrella and let them down the horizon, the stars a coma.

Yes, I'm talking about Dec. 21, 2012, the end of the Mayan calendar and, in the minds of many conspiracy theorists, the end of the world. The countdown has begun – we have 18 days left.

Is this the end of the world? Or, will it be TGS all over again? It can't be. I'm young to die. Where's John Cusack when you need him?

I'm not trying to ruin an anyone's parade – although, that is what doomsayers are expecting – but nothing's going to happen. People have been predicting the end since the beginning.

The Internet went, as warped as it is, has some strange fiction, on global disaster. Predicting the end of the world seems to be the unspoken night command for many religious groups, just look at Twitter.



Brad Campbell
Opinion

Computing

A Christian broadcaster, Campbell first predicted the end of the world to be May 21, 2011. He worried the global war would be the global war but the globe continued to spin. He then predicted the apocalypse to be Oct. 21, 2011. Well, you can figure it out, we're all still here.

Man, that Kool-Aid must look sweet, but it's a little strong.

The world won't end in an instant, but we're already on our way out. Think about it – global warming, overpopulation, double time resources, war, famine, disease and nuclear weapons of destruction – we can't go on.

Why then?

According to the World Population Review, no longer than we're about sustainable population, we are currently using 50 per cent more resources than the Earth is producing. The West, specifically the U.S. and Canada, are exceeding 100 per cent, so wonder we've completed the western dream.

“The human mind, as warped as it is, has some strange fiction on global disaster.”

How do we correct our selfish? Come now, and it doesn't – just having kids, drive, quit politics, eat less, start over, make everyone conscious of humanity's downward spiral and take JET PUNK off the air.

SPOKE

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Marijuana prohibition doesn't make sense

When I was growing up, I was told that using marijuana is not bad. However, I was never told why.

Now, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program in Kansas and Washington has empowered officers with the licensing the dangers of marijuana to students anywhere, completely by taking it out of the curriculum, according to KSNB news in Washington.

Well, even U.S. states, Colorado and Washington, voting to legalize and regulate cannabis for those 21 years and older in Nov. 6, and Oregon's unanimously a proposal to legalize the sale and consumption of marijuana in the country, the support to legalize its recreational use has become more mainstream. More and more people recognize it's not as dangerous as it was made out to be and that prohibition has caused more harm than good.

In addition when there was an election victory at my high school and one of the parties was the Marijuana Party, school administration was to



Aris Manuel
Opinion

and the prohibition.

The candidate received a few stickers from the crowd and other candidates. I didn't see any people took him or his opponent seriously at that time.

But it's not a laughing matter when thousands of people are killed each year on drug-related while billions of our tax dollars were wasted on 15 years of prohibition keeping people locked up for something millions of people use already today.

According to the 2011 World Drug Report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, about 80 per cent of those who used illegal drugs in 2008 were using cannabis, which is about 158 million people around the world.

Physicians, law enforcement and former government attorneys are speaking out saying that legalizing

pot is the right path to take. Law Enforcement Against Prohibition is an organization that has activist and former law enforcement and criminal justice community members. It is dedicated to ending the harm marijuana prohibition has done.

I don't believe people should be punished for using cannabis, which does not harm others and does less harm to the community than most of the legal substances and food we use today.

"Marijuana is the natural form of one of the most popularly active substances known to man," said Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) administrator, law professor, Princeton University, in a report about the accepted safety of its use under medical supervision.

Yet, it was Harry J. Anslinger, America's first "drug czar" in the 1930s, who said, "Marijuana is an addictive drug which produces in its users insanity, criminality and death."

In actual fact, according to Young, cannabis has never been responsible for a single

death. He says criminalizing its use is irresponsible, unless you can create 1,500 jobs in 15 minutes.

However, legal substances such as alcohol, caffeine, aspirin and second-hand smoke kill lots of people.

Yes, we don't put people in jail for drinking too much or for the involved in several causes for smoking cigarettes.

According to a Pew Research has, poll released in January, 66 per cent of Canadians are in favour of legalizing or decriminalizing marijuana.

66 More and more people recognize it's not as dangerous as it was made out to be. ??

I myself didn't see the logic of prohibition until I started doing my own research on the many uses cannabis has and it wasn't just to get high. Many use it to deal with daily life to help a number of

subacute, including chronic pain, anxiety, mental illness and HIV/AIDS, just to name a few, while all Canadian provinces are planning to introduce compensation for the almost 10,000 jobs caused.

According to a CTV news article earlier this month, "The Ontario government says ending it is the leading cause of premature deaths and illness in the province and costs the health-care system \$1.6 billion a year."

Yet, medical marijuana dispensaries are being raided, including access for patients who rely on cannabis for relief. Cannabis is one of the safest drugs out there, even compared to those approved by doctors and sold in pharmacies.

According to Health Canada's 2011 Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey, about 15 per cent of those who use cannabis are using it for medical purposes.

With increasing support to end prohibition, the facts cannot be ignored any longer and reasons to keep cannabis illegal are running out.

So many shows, so little time

Technology is evolving so quickly that it is almost impossible to stay current with the latest products.

However, technology does not always help us. In the past week I have encountered two people who said they watch, and keep up-to-date on, approximately eight television shows. Now, these shows aren't just of a series such as *The Simpsons* or *Family Guy* where a viewer could watch any episode and quickly learn the story line. No, these shows have no depth plots that would be too complicated for the most viewers to understand if they started watching halfway through a season or episode.

There are mostly hour-long programs that require focus and concentration to watch all of the cues, story lines, subplots and episodes. So, that's about an hour a night, every night, spent in front of the TV just to get a *Grey's Anatomy* fix.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I don't even have enough time to have dinner



Mike Velma
Opinion

between projects, work and social life. But alone have an hour to waste watching in front of the boob tube.

There are people who struggle to watch every one of these shows that they claim is they willingly jump ahead in the middle of their lives just so they can watch TV. Forgetting to pick up your mail from hockey practice because *Football* was on is unacceptable.

There is no need to get a lot of rest on your final paper because you were trying to finish it while watching the season finale of *Grey's Anatomy*.

Sure, it's entertaining and on a rainy day it is quite acceptable. But besides that,

you gain nothing from it besides a never-ending talk about on Monday morning with all your classmates or co-workers.

Whatever happened to getting some good old exercise or spending time enjoying the fruits we work your friends?

That has all shifted to staying at an over-the-counter with all your friends around it. Their eyes are either glazed over from too much TV exposure, or they're wondering to see why the hell we're in front, probably to discuss the latest scene in *Vampire Diaries*.

There is no such thing as TV that is so addicting that it is almost impossible to find someone who doesn't have a favourite show. There are the thrillers and crime shows, the romantic and comedy shows and even the odd and weird ones.

There are so many things in this world to experience, there shouldn't be enough time for TV, not the other way around.

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Game on

BY KEILA MATHIESSEN

With the sounds of cheers and disappointed groans from participants awaiting control, the Sanctuary at Conestoga was transformed into a video games hangout on Nov. 30.

Although there was no Call of Duty or Halo, students could walk into the Sanctuary and sit at any screen they wanted to watch their video games streaming.

On the stage they could play Forza Motorsport Racing against five other players in teams with built-in speakers for the realistic sounds of the track. In front of the stage players could face off in volleyball, boxing or table tennis, one-on-one or in teams, against other players through the Xbox Kinect. Finally, in the centre of the room were six computers set up with a variety of sports video games such as FIFA 2012 and NHL 2012.

The event was sponsored by Conestoga Students Inc. (CSI) with the games and consoles provided by "We the Gamer," a company that aims to deliver all around Canada setting up video game days.

"We just bring the experi-

ment of gaming as students can play amongst each other," said We Got Game! employee, Dave Miller. "A lot of students do this to kind of relax after school."

CSI's events co-ordinator, Dicky Hebe, said she found "We Got Game!" at a convention that she attended and she chose to bring them to Conestoga because the college's biggest club is for video games players.

"I'm personally not a gamer at all but I relaxed when using games and it was so much fun," Hebe said.

"I know we had a big gaming club and I know that not only would it make our games buggy, but it would also be good for students who maybe aren't so into gaming but still want to have a good time."

Also, according to Hebe, the Sen (the upper level of the Sanctuary) has private rooms with televisions and game consoles where students can go to relax and watch movies or play video games in any room.

The bar opened shortly after the program got started, so the students could enjoy a beer or two while playing their game of choice.

"Students are like our fun day," said Hebe.



PHOTO BY KEILA MATHIESSEN

Second-year recreational and leisure studies student Jordan Parkinson (left to right), Jordan Foster and Steve Brown take some time over their lunch hour to play NBA 2012 in the Sanctuary on Nov. 30 for CSI's Video Game Challenge Day. This is a good way to relieve stress with the upcoming exams.

CONESTOGA COLLEGE STUDENTS SPREAD SOME CHEER



PHOTO BY MATHIESSEN

Approximately 20 business students from Conestoga's Guelph campus showed their community spirit on Nov. 30 as they participated in the city's annual Santa Claus parade. The students, who were decorated out in red Conestoga T-shirts, Santa hats and volunteer sashes, distributed candy to children along the parade route accompanied by Conestoga's mascot, Billy the Conster, and business faculty member Anne Turner and the chair of business, David Smith. Above, left to right are Megan Markley, Alexandra Davis, Rebecca Wilson, Rebecca Havelton, Ashley Keating, Ashley Collins, Julie Apoll, Jennifer Thies and Ryan Livingston.

EXAM TIME FILLS THE LIBRARY



PHOTO BY JESSICA LAMONTAGNE

Conestoga students buckle down as exam week approaches. The Davis campus library filled up quickly on Nov. 29 as the fall 2012 semester comes to an end.



The first snowfall of the season covered Bartok Capistrano and Julie Robinson, both 19-year-old students at the University of Waterloo, as they skated at Lions Arena in Kitchener on Nov. 24.

PHOTO BY JESSICA HATHORN

'Tis the season to be jolly

BY JESSICA HATHORN

The holidays are right around the corner, leaving many people wondering what they can do with their time off.

Because it's cold and a lot of people choose to be outside, but what they don't realize is that, even though it isn't warm out, there are still things to do — providing you dress for the weather.

To start, there is tobogganing — the fun, traditionally fun, winter activity. To do this, a snow-covered hill is needed, along with the aid of chaperones. One of the best hills for tobogganing is Waterloo Spire in Mount Tremblant, located on Ottawa Street.

If there isn't any snow, you can go skating at Chopper Lake and Adventure Park, located at 1690 River Rd. E. in Kitchener. Student prices are in effect: Tuesdays and Saturdays, from 6-8 p.m. and 8 p.m., respectively. Open 5-11 p.m. on Thursdays.

There is also skating, both

inside and out. Kitchener City Hall has a free outdoor skating rink that opens to the public, so weather permits, or there are local, free or at a small charge, public skating that can be attended. To find times and prices, check City Hall's website at www.kitch.ca.

"I love bringing my kids skating. It gets them active, but they still have fun, and so long as we dress for the circumstances we stay warm too," said Jason Gurecki, a Kitchener resident who was skating at Lions Arena in Kitchener on Nov. 24.

Another fun option is snowboarding or skiing, which can be done at Chopper Ski & Snowboard Resort in Kitchener. Lift tickets start at \$50 for a two-hour pass.

"There's probably no better activity to do when there is snow on the ground," said Josh Delaney, a 19-year-old student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. "Every year my family plans at least one big activity, so there's a lot of fun."

BY JESSICA HATHORN

Some residents of north are Ontario looked at the Christmas season early by attending Country Home Candles' 27th annual Christmas Open House from Nov. 23 to 25. The family-owned candle factory, which is always filled with delightful fragrances, was the essence of the holiday season thanks to its cheerful music, special deals, Christmas decorations and the opportunity to give.

Peter Northgroves owns Country Home Candles with his wife, Nancy. The business is located on Main Street Church Road in Delhi, approximately an hour from Kitchener. "Winter, by itself, every year the entire staff decorates a dazzling Christmas tree and sells tickets for people to win it with all of the proceeds going to the Salvation Army Christmas hamper program. The winner of the raffle gets to keep the tree, ornaments and all."

"Giving back is important, especially around the holiday season."

— Peter Northgroves

"Giving back is important," he said, "especially around the holiday season."

The four-day open house featured special deals on the business' candles. Customers have fragrances such as red delicious, holiday decorations, pride and romance, various scents of soap and body care and several food items including gourmet dips and drink mixes.

Karen Northgroves, who owns the open house home and her son, every year and has her daughters to thank for it. Lauren, 25, Abby, 21, and Hannah, 15, currently in Waterloo, is a co-owner. "We have several media pages for it, but they also posted around the word to a lot of our customers."

The candle factory has been open since 1984 and has been internationally successful. The Northgroves' products will not only be their own, but also be second from other places such as Green Earth, Cornwall, Country Home Candles has retail partners in places across the globe



STAFF PHOTO

Country Home Candles displayed a beautifully decorated Christmas tree that could be won at their 27th annual open house from Nov. 23 to 25 in North County. All of the proceeds from the purchase raffle tickets went to the Salvation Army Christmas hamper program.

such as Ireland, the UK and the United States.

Peter said he is proud that they have had such success, especially since they started out in a small family business.

"We're an independent business so it is making our products worldwide is a pretty good achievement."

Throughout the day, a student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, said she loves to work at the yearly open house because it's a great way to get into the Christmas spirit.

"We put on Christmas music all day so everyone is always in a great mood when they shop for their family,"

she said. "Who doesn't love Christmas candles?"

Jennifer Brown, a personal support worker and currently a night shift nurse at the Waterloo hospital, said she loves to work at the yearly open house because it's a great way to get into the Christmas spirit.

"We put on Christmas music all day so everyone is always in a great mood when they shop for their family,"

she said. "Who doesn't love Christmas candles?"

"We're an independent business so it is making our products worldwide is a pretty good achievement."

CHRISTMAS ART A THING TO ADMIRE

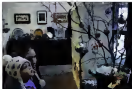


PHOTO BY JESSICA HATHORN

Like and Brock Burdy admire a makeshift Christmas tree at the Radio Store and Deli that started on Nov. 23 at the Cambridge Galleries. The show is held to highlight the work of local artists and writers.

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Inmates' art on display across region

BY WENDY BARNETT

Metal, concrete and bone — these are what inmates find everyday at a federal prison. However, within those walls something beautiful and our prison is happening.

In November you could view and purchase the art created by female inmates at the Grand Valley Institution (GVI) at the Kitchener Centre ARTSPACE show at Kitchener City Hall. This month the art has been moved to three new locations. You can view and purchase the exhibits at the Queen Street Community Kitchener Museum (Interactive) Gift and Gallery in Cambridge and the Accelerator Center in Waterloo.

With 100 per cent of the proceeds being donated to women's and children's education and organizations, the inmates are given a chance to contribute and respect with the community. Community Development Initiative (CDI) is a non-profit organization which provides multiple services on conflict resolution, group support for people impacted by sexual trauma, and support for women in returning to the community from prison. CDI works with the female program which focuses on helping women contribute to a community after finishing their sentence. This includes the prison art program supported by Strids, called Fresh Start Creatives.

Strids was started in 1998 by a former inmate of the Kitchener Prison for Women. It originally was a telephone support service for women sentenced to federal prison.

Now they are helping women become members of the community with many volunteers helping these women while incarcerated and after their release by creating a circle of support.

Jessica MacIsaac is the coordinator of Strids Nights, which has volunteers go to the prisons to hold arts and craft sessions and physical activities. MacIsaac works with the women at GVI firsthand. She said she knows that Strids changes the cycle of incarceration by connecting the women to the community. She remembers one woman in particular who arrived a prison inmate. She released and broke her parole and returned to GVI. After the second time she decided to try the Strids art night. She was then able to connect with the volunteers who gave her the tools of management she needed to keep her out of prison and be welcomed back into the community.

"Kitchener has one of the most federal prisons in Canada, and we have the unique position to help these women integrate back into society. It also sends taxpayer money to



PHOTO BY WENDY BARNETT

Rebecca Francy (left) and Deen Howard observe the art work done by inmates at inmates of the Grand Valley Institution at Kitchener City Hall on Nov. 29.

help women stay out of prison," MacIsaac said.

On average the cost of incarceration is \$100,000 per year. Currently at GVI there are approximately 500 inmates incarcerated. That equals \$50 million per year. This is another reason why Strids needs to continue to work in the community.

Rita Mann, a local artist, volunteers her services as an art consultant to the Fresh Start Creatives program.

Mann runs the Night and Day art studio with her husband in Mount Forest. The studio sells handmade pottery done by Mann and other artists.

Mann got involved with Strids in April and has taken to volunteer on Tuesdays for over an hour to help the women use creativity as an outlet, and allow them to contribute to society by selling their artwork for charity.

"Most of the women don't see their artwork as beautiful. Once I show them the finished package you can see their attitudes changing," she said.

She continues her work with Strids because she said she knows the difference it can make.

"There are so many misconceptions about these women, but they are no different than you and me, our mothers, sisters and our aunts."

Kitchener art gallery debuts virtual tours

BY SARAH BARNETT

The Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG) opened its virtual doors to the public by launching an online project on Nov. 7.

Supported by Google, the project, called Interactive Space, allows visitors to take a guided online tour of the exhibitions that are on display.

Melissa MacIsaac, director of public programs at the KWAG, hopes the project will reach out to new and returning audiences in a different way.

"It was a lot of a challenge and a very long time," she said. "Putting information about our exhibitions and trying to do some outreach and education online has been on my radar for a long time."

Not only does the interactive tour allow visitors to view all the works of art, but also listen to commentary from the curators and even the artists themselves. The online experience will

an extra layer of information. What gallery goes wouldn't get, since the privilege of having the visitor feel a guided tour is restricted to only one. The downloadable audio tour focuses on the curatorial experience, where the curators describe the steps taken and meaning behind these pieces.

"It adds a whole other experience," MacIsaac said. "You get a deeper understanding of what the work is about that you wouldn't get. Don't just looking at it and seeing the exhibition label."

However, MacIsaac and people should still come to the gallery and not be satisfied with the virtual tour alone, because the information in the online tour is supplementary.

"The thing about contemporary art is a lot of it is really ephemeral," she said. "Our audiences could hear the artists talk about their work, but to really understand what the work is about, they have to come in and see it."

Currently, the only online online in the gallery's main exhibition, called *Intoxique*, which focuses on environmental conservation and destruction in our technological age. In the future, MacIsaac said the gallery will have all of the exhibits available to view an interactive device, including video tour material for both the main exhibition and gallery spaces, and in the Kitchener galleries. The project will continue throughout 2013.

"I think we're going to see Interactive Space as an experimental point for how we can continue to work on our online presence," MacIsaac said. "It's hard to say where going to come next, since technology is changing so fast."

Additionally, Interactive Space offers audiences a family activity guide and links to current online exhibitions, as well as information on current exhibitions at the gallery.

The KWAG also has over 4,000 works in their perma-



PHOTO BY SARAH BARNETT

Melissa MacIsaac, director of public programs at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, was instrumental in launching Interactive Space last month.

nent collection, which are held in public trust, available for viewing online through the Kitchener Water Our 100 of KWAG's permanent collection pieces are also available through Collection X, which is an online project initiated by the Art Gallery of Ontario

as a communal hub for sharing art.

Interactive Space can be accessed from the KWAG's website, www.kwag.ca. More information on the KWAG can be found on their website, Facebook page or Twitter page (@kitchwatergallery).

Take stock of these stuffers

BY ANNEALY GURIN

An Christmas dinner sits chest, shopping for the perfect gift is on the minds of many people.

It's often easier to choose a large sack present for a loved one such as a new computer, phone or video game system, than smaller ones.

Perhaps the toughest of all are stocking stuffers.

Finding ones that are original and inexpensive can be a challenge for many shoppers, but with a little thought and effort, watching your loved one open these stockings can be as rewarding as watching them opening diamonds and rings on a Christmas night.

For the gift-giver, in your list, sweet-scented bath and body products are usually a hit. Soaps such as Bath and Bodyworks or Lush offer you possibly good scents, lotions, bath bombs and shower gels. At the time of your purchase are offered to limited edition holiday scents such as candy cane or cinnamon.

"My mom usually fills my stocking with bath stuff. I love opening it and just being wowed by all the great scents," said Chelsea Hansen, 21, a University of Guelph student who was shopping at the Old Quebec Street Mall in Guelph.

If your friends have a hard time getting out of bed, the best gift is a box of tea and incense. A box of tea and incense would be perfect for filling up a stocking. Some examples include a Young Living tea that doesn't just ring but takes off and then around the main and you can't it, or an olive leafed coffee bag that can play into a cigarette lighter as a way to keep your coffee warm on a long drive.

For your crafty and creative loved ones there are endless options when it comes to stuffing a stocking. Plants, gardeners and small containers can be purchased at dollar stores, or for a more quality product you can go to an art and craft store such as Michaels. A roll of festive printed shirt tape or a bottle

of fabric dye could be just the thing to make it just what a crafty friend.

For a technology enthusiast, some great gifts can be found online or in stores. These include a pair of Bluetooth earbuds to keep your phone while listening to favourite holiday classics. There are many different styles of these available to be by different companies and they can be found at stores such as Amazon.com or even Shoppers Drug Mart.

"I never knew what to put in stockings," said 36-year-old Guelph resident, Celine Martin, another shopper. "I'm not everything to be appreciated and loved, and sometimes it's hard to think of what to put in there that isn't a waste of money."

If all else fails you can never go wrong with bath room necessities such as Slingshotted or disposable soap. Or you could stick with the classics such as scented socks, candles of hot chocolate or candy candy cones.



Shoppers look for Christmas gifts at the Old Quebec Street Mall in Guelph on Nov. 24.

PHOTO BY ANNEALY GURIN

Kitchener looks to elevate music in the area

BY MARK HEDDERLEY

Music and media industry professionals came together Nov. 22 at the annual Music Works session to help provide talent a bigger voice in the music world.

At the event, organized by the City of Kitchener and held at the Victoria Park Pavilion, music and media members discussed many topics on how to get Kitchener on the map for music. Some of the topics discussed were to attract tourism through music, and the possibility of having a music conference/festival in the area.

That session did not sit anything on stone. It merely gave city officials and music industry people a place to share their ideas and how to get there.

Kitchener is clearly proud to be in the music scene already. However, most of

the music is underground or just beginning to emerge. The Music Works project aims to help these artists and attract some attention to the city.

Cambridge College provided the event with technological support, including the use of Microsoft's audio system to play out live real-time responses from the groups as they shared ideas.

Mark Deane, chair of the Board of Music and Arts Councils at Cambridge, said the college is looking at becoming more involved in the regional performance scene and are exploring a number of new directions that would benefit the community and assist in promoting the college as the arts and culture centre.

Bliss Media, a partner of Artworks Media, said it would like to be able to bring back famous local musical talent, and have them speak at a conference and even have them play one of the main

parts of the festival or to help coordinate local musicians to the next level in the music industry.

"It could be something like 2008 or 2009, the first music festival in the United States. Just not right away," Hedderley said.

Following the session, the participants went to a light buffet and a lunch. Two musical acts also played, as everyone mingled and shared more ideas.

"I believe that the event was well received and educational valuable information shared for action. The next steps will see a focus on an action plan to ensure that the momentum from the Music Works initiative moves from paper to tangible results," Deane said.

The results and ideas of the session are still being analyzed by the city, however the hope is some of the plans will be put into action in the new year.



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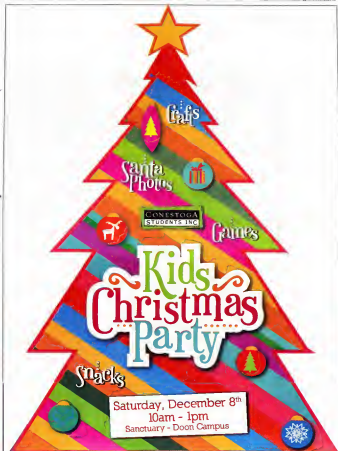
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